



# **Boston House**

# **New College of The Humanities**

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

July 2019

**KANDA**

This report has been prepared by Kanda Consulting on behalf of the New College of the Humanities.

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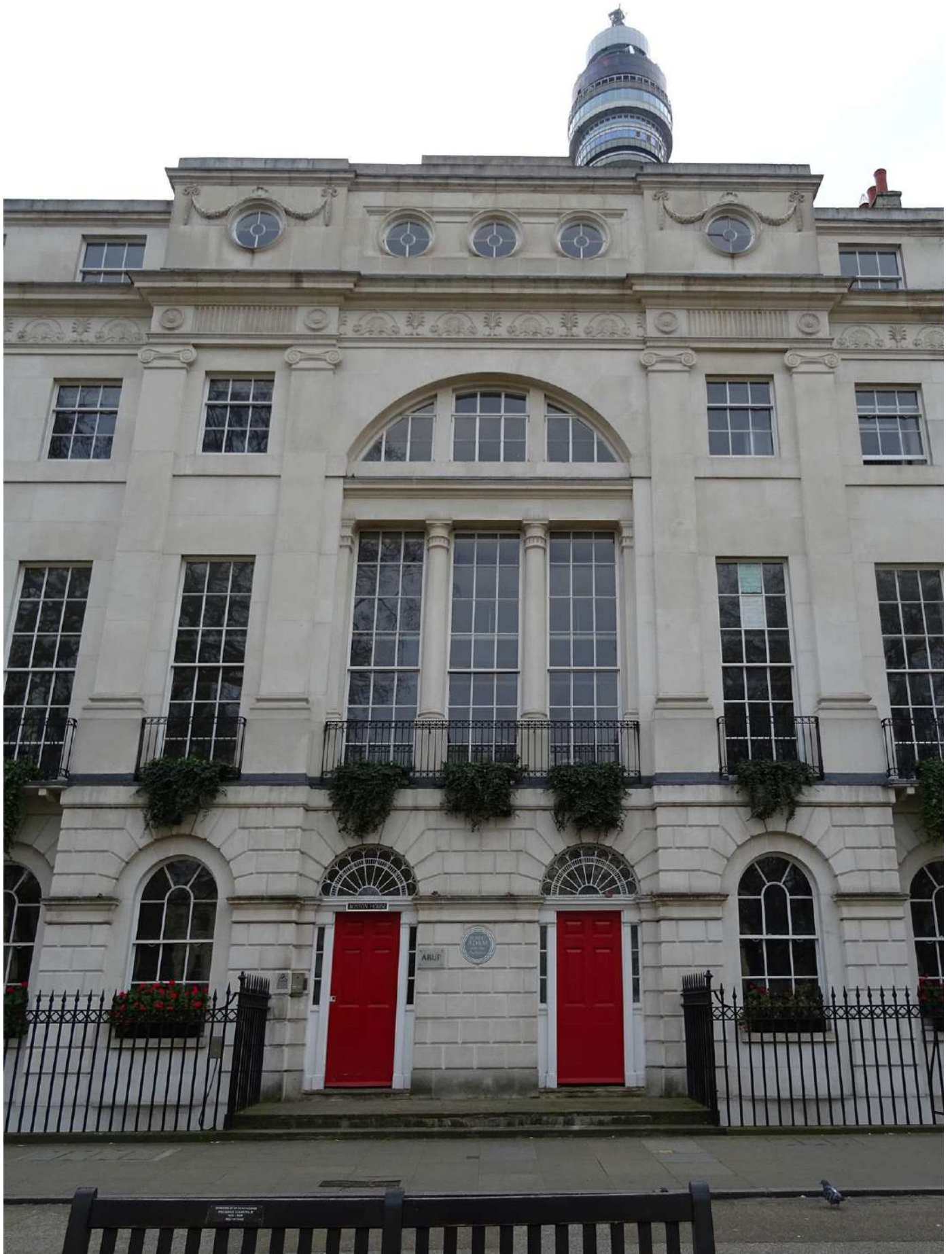
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**1.0**

**Executive Summary**





# 1.0 Executive Summary

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**1.1** New College of the Humanities (The Applicant) appointed Kanda Consulting, a specialist public affairs and consultation company, to undertake the community and stakeholder consultation in relation to a planning application for the change of use of Boston House from office (Class B1a) to a flexible use for use as either offices (B1a) and/or a non-residential education institution (Class D1) including internal alterations.

**1.2** The Site is Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 6EY, which is situated to the south of Euston Road and the west of Tottenham Court Road. The site is within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area, which has a homogenous character and predominantly contains 4-storey townhouses. Boston House is Grade 1 listed (for further information please refer to the Heritage Statement).

**1.3** The planning application is for full planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use of Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square, London, from office (Class B1a) to a flexible use for use as either offices (B1a) and/or a non-residential education institution (Class D1) including internal alterations. The building will be used as a new home for the New College of the Humanities (NCH) and no external works will be undertaken.

**1.4** Activities undertaken as part of the consultation process have included:

- A letter (Appendix I) to 1,403 properties in an area surrounding the site (Appendix II) providing information on the proposals and an invitation to the drop-in event.
- A public drop-in event held on 23 July 2019 to inform interested local residents about NCH's proposed change of use of Boston House.
- Boards (Appendix III) were on show at the drop-

in event to provide more information about NCH, Northeastern University and the proposed change of use.

- Provision of feedback forms (Appendix IV) to attendees at the drop-in event, enabling residents and businesses to provide written feedback on the plans.
- The provision of PDF copies of the boards to interested parties via email.

**1.5** The Applicant will continue to engage proactively with the community throughout the planning process and beyond.

**1.6** In total, the drop-in event on 23 July 2019 was attended by 11 people, with attendees visiting from the properties around Fitzroy Square.

**1.7** Throughout the consultation process, a telephone number and email address were provided and managed by Kanda, to supply further information to residents, businesses and stakeholders on request.

**1.8** Throughout the process, New College of the Humanities has sought input from a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals and taken this feedback into consideration as the plans have developed.

**1.9** The feedback gathered at the drop-in event was largely positive and attendees welcomed the proposals. Attendees were positive about NCH moving to the area and suggested that the Operational Plan seemed well considered.

**1.10** The feedback gathered at the event is covered in further detail in section 4.0 of this report.

**1.11** This report has been informed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 which promotes early community engagement in planning matters.



**2.0**

**Introduction**





## 2.0 Introduction

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**2.1** The Site is situated on the southern side of the square and comprises a large four-storey office building plus basement. The Site is located to the south of Euston Road and the west of Tottenham Court Road and is within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.

**2.2** The Fitzroy Square Conservation Area was previously part of the Bloomsbury Square Conservation Area (designated in 1968), but in 2010 was designated as a separate Conservation Area due to its physical separation from the main part of Bloomsbury and its distinct character and evolution. Due to its short period of development (late 18th – early 19th century), Fitzroy Square Conservation Area has a homogenous character and predominantly contains 4-storey townhouses.

**2.3** The planning application is for full planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use of Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square, London, from office (Class B1a) to a flexible use for use as either offices (B1a) and/or a non-residential education institution (Class D1) including internal alterations. There will be an internal refurbishment but no external works to the building.

**2.4** New College of the Humanities is a University level college founded in 2011, which currently has 204 undergraduate students and 6 postgraduate students enrolled. The College is currently located at 19 Bedford Square, a 6,500 square foot, Grade 1 listed Georgian building.

**2.5** NCH offers three-year undergraduate degree programs in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), Philosophy, Politics and History (PPH), and combinations of Literature, Creative Writing, History, Philosophy, Art History, Politics and International Relations, Law, and Economics. NCH also offers postgraduate degree programs.

**2.6** At the end of 2018, NCH was acquired by Northeastern University, a US teaching and research institution based in Boston, and became part of Northeastern University's global network.

**2.7** Northeastern University has an undergraduate enrolment of 13,825 and is ranked 44th in the US. Northeastern has existing campuses in Seattle, San Francisco, Charlotte, Toronto, and Vancouver. Northeastern's academic plan, Northeastern 2025, projects a vision of a global university system with locations in key cities across the world. NCH is the first existing university Northeastern has partnered with.





# 3.0

## Consultation Process



## 3.0 Consultation Process

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**3.1** The objectives of the consultation process were to approach local stakeholders who may have an interest in the site, or who may be affected by the proposals, and to raise awareness among local residents and businesses about the plans.

**3.2** New College of the Humanities has engaged with local stakeholders and local residents surrounding the site.

**3.3** A programme of consultation with the wider community began in early July 2019 with the issuing of letters to households and businesses in the local area, introducing the scheme and publicising the drop-in event, which was held on 23 July 2019.

**3.4** The drop-in event provided an opportunity for residents, hotel guests and local stakeholders to view the plans and meet members of the team.

**3.5** The drop-in event is covered in further detail in section 4.0 of this report.





# 4.0

## Consultation on the Proposals





## 4.0 Consultation on the Proposals

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**4.1** The aim of the public drop-in event was to inform interested parties of the proposed change of use and introduce them to NCH and Northeastern University. Feedback on the proposals and aims of the College was gathered at the event so that the team could understand attendees' aspirations for the site.

**4.2** New College of the Humanities hosted a public drop-in event on site at Boston House, 36-38 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 6EY on Tuesday 23 July 2019 15:00 – 19:00.

**4.3** The drop-in event invitation was sent to 1,403 properties surrounding the site. The invitation included a short introduction to the proposals and NCH alongside information about the drop-in event. The invitation was sent to the following distribution area which has been designed to include the entirety of Fitzroy Square and the surrounding homes and businesses:



*Distribution Area Map*

**4.4** The drop-in event invitation was sent to the ward councillors for Bloomsbury ward: Cllr Adam Harrison, Cllr Sabrina Francis, and Cllr Rishi Madlani.

**4.5** The drop-in event invitation was also sent to the following community groups and societies:

- Fitzroy Square Neighbourhood Association

- Bloomsbury Conservation Areas Advisory Committee
- The Fitzrovia Partnership BID
- Charlotte Street Association
- Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association
- Bloomsbury Association
- Fitzrovia Trust
- Bloomsbury Residents' Action Group

**4.6** The drop-in event was staffed by representatives from New College of the Humanities, Northeastern University, SM Planning and Kanda Consulting. In total, there were 11 attendees, of whom 10 signed in, with residents visiting from Fitzroy Square and the roads surrounding it.

**4.7** In addition to local residents, the event was also attended by a representative from the Georgian Group.

**4.8** After they had examined the boards, attendees were invited to complete a feedback form.

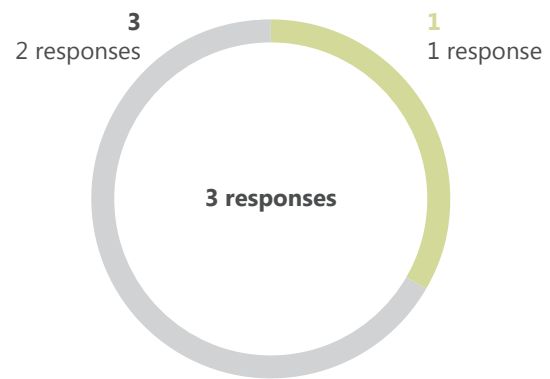
**4.9** To date, two feedback forms have been received. The results of this quantitative feedback are detailed below.

**4.10** The results indicate that attendees generally understand the aims and objectives of New College of the Humanities and support the planning approach to avoid heavy construction of adding any additional height to Boston House.

**I support/value being consulted on these plans.**



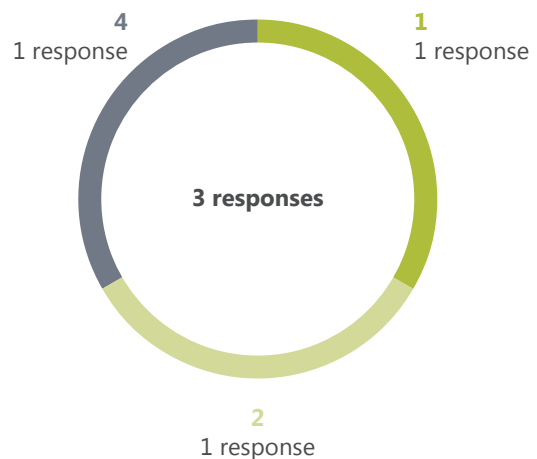
**I understand the aims and objectives of New College of the Humanities.**



**I support the planning approach to avoid heavy construction or adding height to Boston House.**



**I would like more information about the student management plan.**



**4.11** Those who indicated that they would like to receive further information on the Student Management Plan will be sent this information once it is available.

**4.12** In addition to the quantitative feedback above, qualitative feedback was collected through a question on the feedback forms and conversations with the project team. This can be broadly summarised as follows:

**4.12.1 Construction**

Attendees queried whether there will be increased noise and disturbance whilst the internal refurbishment is ongoing. The project team explained that as the works are limited to internal works, the impact on neighbouring properties should be minimal as there will be no piling or heavy works.

**4.12.2 Vehicle movements**

Local residents were keen to find out whether there will be an increase in traffic around the square. The team explained that during the refurbishment there will be increased vehicular access to the site, but once the internal works are complete the only vehicular access to the site will be private vehicle (details are provided in the Travel Plan). The vast majority of students will travel to the College via public transport, meaning that the impact on residents should be minimal.

The team explained that there will be limited deliveries to the site at the main Fitzroy Square entrance during normal business hours. However, the College will avoid scheduling deliveries at rush hour.

**4.12.3 Access and opening times**

Some attendees questioned what the opening times of the College will be and whether there will be much evening access to the site. The project team explained that the site will be open from 8am until 10pm Monday to Friday and 10am until 5pm on weekends, but classes will generally run from 9am until 6pm from Monday to Friday. The team also explained that there will be occasional events with visiting academics in the evening (until around 8pm) and a monthly social event that runs until 11pm.

**4.12.4 Lighting**

A number of attendees suggested that they are concerned that there might be fluorescent lighting in the building. Some attendees also asked whether it would be possible to make the front room in the building look domestic rather than commercial. The team said that they were happy to consider this whilst drawing up the plans and making choices regarding lighting and décor.

**4.12.5 NCH and Northeastern**

Attendees were interested to learn more about NCH and Northeastern University. They were pleased to learn that the College has occupied space on Bedford Square since 2012 and has received no complaints regarding noise, activity, or student conduct.

**4.12.6 Consultation**

Attendees were pleased to have been consulted on the proposals with a number remarking that they were pleased to have established a relationship with the College at such an early stage in the process.

**4.13** The quantitative and qualitative feedback gathered at the event indicates that attendees generally support the proposed change of use and refurbishment of Boston House.





**5.0**  
**Conclusion**





## 5.0 Conclusion

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**5.1** The consultation approach began in early July 2019 and sought to engage with statutory and non-statutory consultees.

**5.2** The pre-submission public drop-in session provided an opportunity for constructive engagement with members of the project team, including representatives from New College of the Humanities, Northeastern University, SM Planning and Kanda Consulting. This dialogue will be continued throughout the planning process.

**5.3** As part of the brief for open consultation, an introductory letter was sent to a distribution area including 1,403 addresses inviting them to the public drop-in event.

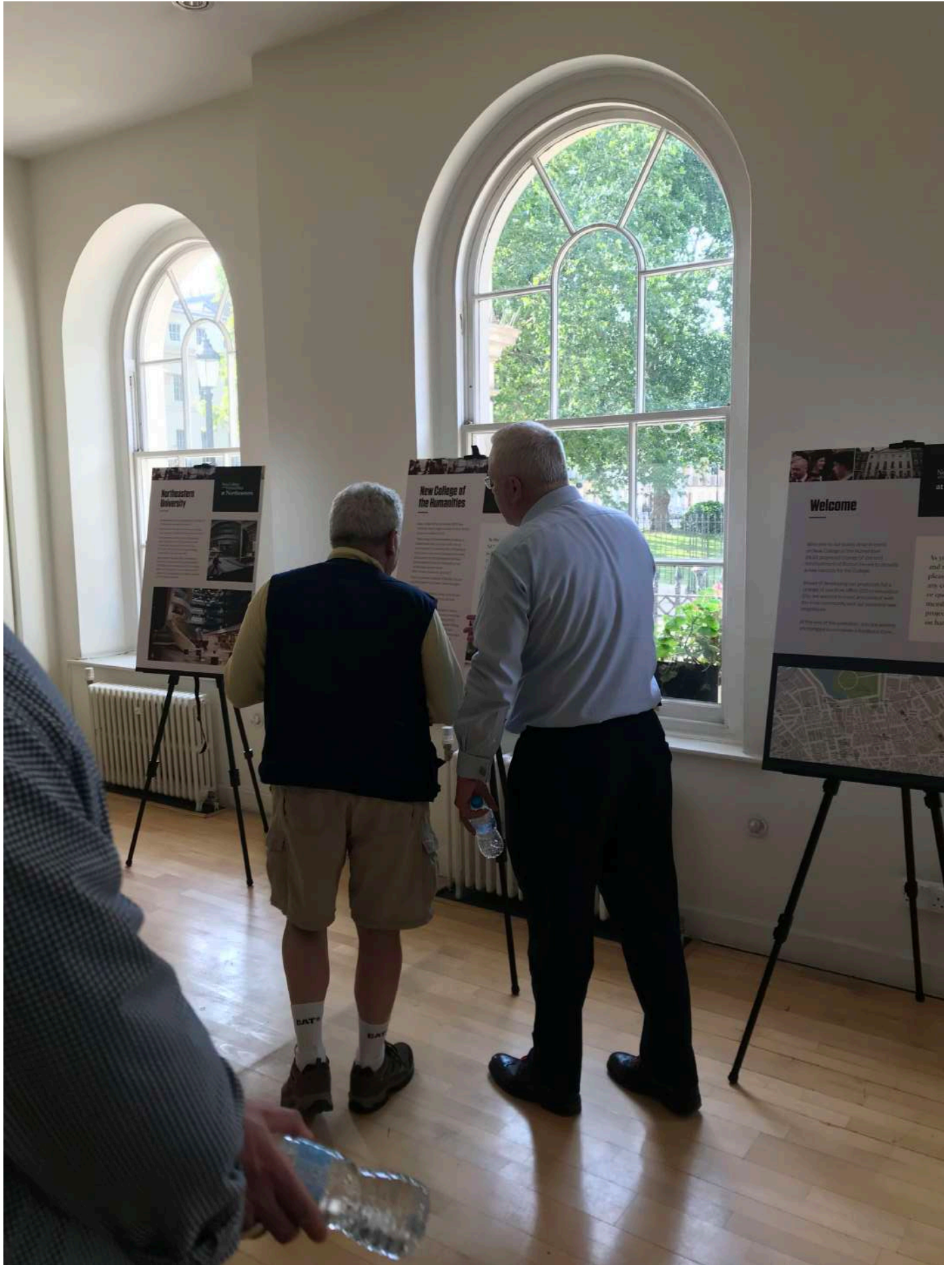
**5.4** Feedback on the proposals was generally positive and consultees largely support NCH's plans to refurbish and change the use of Boston House to provide a new home for the College.

**5.5** In particular, attendees welcomed the decision to limit the construction to internal works only. Attendees were also pleased to learn that the College plans to work closely with the community surrounding the site to ensure that any impact is kept to a minimum.

**5.6** The Applicant is committed to continued engagement with the community and other key stakeholders following submission of a planning application.









# Appendices



# Appendix I Drop-in Invitation Letter

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**KANDA**

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Tel +44 (0) 20 3900 3676  
Email [nch@kandaconsulting.co.uk](mailto:nch@kandaconsulting.co.uk)

Date  
**10 July 2019**

Re  
**New College of the  
Humanities,  
Invitation to meet**

Dear Neighbour,

I am writing to you on behalf of New College of the Humanities (NCH) to invite you to meet with us to discuss NCH's plans to refurbish Boston House to provide a new headquarters for the College.

By way of introduction, NCH is a university-level college that was founded in 2012, with the aim of providing the highest quality education in the humanities and social sciences. The College offers a unique and broad liberal arts-inspired curriculum with highly personalised teaching including a one-to-one tutorial system.

The College has been very successful and the number of students studying there has increased year on year. As a result of this, NCH has now outgrown its current building in Bedford Square. Given its ties to the area, the College is now looking to relocate to a larger building in the Bloomsbury area.

Recently, Boston House, a large property in Fitzroy Square has become available to lease, and NCH is interested in refurbishing this building to be used as their new headquarters. NCH is interested in leasing the property and, before they progress with Boston House, the College wants to meet with local residents and businesses.

As our potential future neighbours, we are committed to keeping you updated throughout the process. We will therefore be holding a drop-in session on **Tuesday 23 July 3pm – 7pm, onsite at Boston House, Fitzroy Square, Fitzrovia, London W1T 6EY**, where you will have a chance to meet with members of the project team and hear more about the College.

You do not need to let us know if you are coming, but if you are unable to attend, we would be very happy to send copies of the materials once finalised. Please don't hesitate to contact us using the above details if you have any questions or you would like us to send you a copy of the materials.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'John Greenshields'.

John Greenshields  
Associate Director, Kanda Consulting

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NCH at Northeastern Ltd • Registered in England no. 07317195 • Registered office as above



## Appendix II Invitation Distribution Area

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# Appendix III Drop-in Boards

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## Welcome

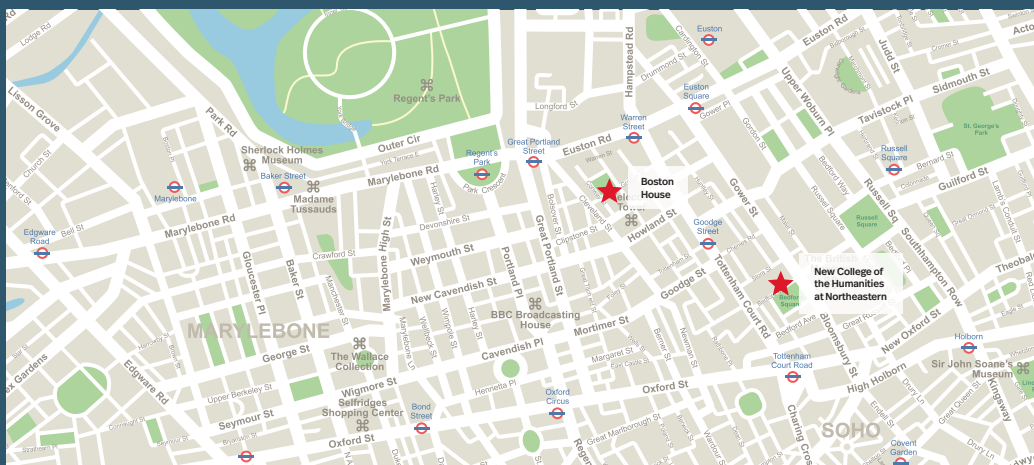
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Welcome to our public drop-in event on New College of the Humanities' (NCH) proposed change of use and refurbishment of Boston House to provide a new campus for the College.

Ahead of developing our proposals for a change of use from office (B1) to education (D1), we wanted to meet and consult with the local community and our potential new neighbours.

At the end of the exhibition, you are warmly encouraged to complete a feedback form.

As you walk around and read the boards, please direct any comments or questions to members of the project team who are on hand to help.







# New College of the Humanities

- New College of the Humanities (NCH) is a University-level college founded in 2011. Its first students enrolled in 2012.
- “New College of the Humanities combines a unique liberal arts curriculum with one-on-one teaching in an international community to ensure that every student is prepared to work, will achieve their full potential and will leave fully equipped to face the challenges of our increasingly complex world.”  
(NCH mission statement, April 2017)
- NCH is currently located at 19 Bedford Square, a 6,500 square foot, Grade 1 listed Georgian building.
- NCH’s total student body during 2018/19 was 204 undergraduate students and six post graduate students.
- NCH offers three-year undergraduate degree programs in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), Philosophy, Politics and History (PPH), and combinations of Literature, Creative Writing, History, Philosophy, Art History, Politics and International Relations, Law, and Economics. NCH also offers postgraduate degree programs.
- In the first UK national awards for which NCH entered, the “WhatUni” awards of 2015, NCH came top in the category “Best Courses and Lecturers” and fourth in the category “Best University.”
- In the latest National Student Survey results involving 330,000 students and 400 institutions (published July 2019), 100 percent of NCH students were satisfied with their course of study (sector average: 84 percent).

At the end of 2018, NCH was acquired by Northeastern University, a US teaching and research institution based in Boston, and became part of Northeastern University’s global network.





New College  
of the Humanities  
at Northeastern

# Northeastern University

- Northeastern has an undergraduate enrollment of 13,825 and is ranked 44th in the US.
- Northeastern has existing campuses in Seattle, San Francisco, Charlotte, Toronto, and Vancouver.
- Northeastern's academic plan, Northeastern 2025, projects a vision of a global university system with locations in key cities across the world. NCH is the first existing university Northeastern has partnered with.
- Northeastern is focusing efforts on assisting NCH with the recruitment of students seeking a UK degree-level credential into NCH's existing high-quality programs, and on expanding NCH's capacity to host pathway and mobility programs for Northeastern students.





New College  
of the Humanities  
at Northeastern

## Boston House

- Boston House lies at 36-38 Fitzroy Square, and is part of a symmetrical terrace of eight Georgian houses on the south side of the square.
- The building has 21,754 square feet of accommodation over 5 levels and provides modern open plan offices.
- Most recently, the building was used by Arup as a large office and call centre with approximately 200 people working in the building.



Boston House was built in the late part of the 1700s and is Grade I listed. The property was extensively damaged by bombing during WWII and only the original façade was retained when the building was redeveloped in the late 1940s.



New College  
of the Humanities  
at Northeastern

## The Proposals

- We will be applying for a change of use from office (B1) to education (D1).
- We will be applying for Listed Building Consent for alterations to the Grade I listed building.
- Internal alterations include the subdivision of large open spaces into smaller teaching areas and tutorial rooms, the formation of offices, and the reconfiguration of the basement area into a student space.
- As the work will be limited to an internal refit, there will be minimal disruption to neighbouring properties.



The proposed building works will be internal only, no changes will be made to the façade of the listed building and no additions to the building are proposed.



New College  
of the Humanities  
at Northeastern

## Operational Plan

- NCH employs an Operations Manager and a Facilities Coordinator who manage the building on a day-to-day basis to ensure compliance with all required Health and Safety legislation and College policies relating to the building and conduct are followed.
- Most classes on campus will run between from 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- Entrance to the building will be managed by card access.
- There are occasional events with visiting academics that would be run in the evening (until around 8:00 p.m.).
- Students hold a monthly social event that runs until 11:00 p.m.

### The Operational Plan will identify:

- How the building will be managed
  - How community needs will be met
  - How the site will be accessed
  - How issues and complaints will be managed
- Outside security is brought in for these events





New College  
of the Humanities  
at Northeastern

## Commitments to the Community

- NCH has occupied space on Bedford Square since 2012 and has received no complaints regarding noise, activity, or student conduct.
- NCH and Northeastern are committed to strengthening their surrounding communities and propose to become a true community partner by engaging with youth, seniors, schools, and community organizations.
- NCH and Northeastern are open to dialogue with the local community to address any concerns or recommendations.



NCH and Northeastern are committed to working closely with the community to ensure that any impact on local residents is kept to a minimum.



## Next steps

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- We are aiming to submit planning and listed building applications to LB Camden within the next four weeks.
- Local residents will be consulted as part of the neighbour notification alignment. We will also keep local residents informed of our progress every step of the way.
- We are committed to an open dialogue with our potential neighbours throughout the process and we are happy to set up individual or group meetings as requested.

We would be grateful for any feedback and input at any time during the planning process. Please do take the time to fill out a feedback form and place it in the ballot box provided.

Contact us on:  
[nch@kandaconsulting.co.uk](mailto:nch@kandaconsulting.co.uk)

# Appendix IV Feedback Form

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New College  
*of the* Humanities  
at Northeastern

## YOUR FEEDBACK

1 BEING STRONGLY AGREE - 5 BEING STRONGLY DISAGREE

I support/value being consulted on these plans:

1     2     3     4     5

I understand the aims and objectives of New College of the Humanities

1     2     3     4     5

I support the planning approach to avoid heavy construction or adding any height to Boston House.

1     2     3     4     5

I would like more information about the student management plan

1     2     3     4     5

Do you have any further comments?

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.....

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## YOUR DETAILS

NAME: .....

EMAIL: .....

POSTCODE: .....



New College  
*of the Humanities*  
at **Northeastern**



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**Boston House,  
New College of The Humanities**  
Statement of Community Involvement

KANDA